

## Administrative Policy No. 9.09

**Subject:** DSHS Employee Wellness Program

**Information Contact:** DSHS Human Resources

**Authorizing Sources:** [Executive Directive](#)  
[Executive Order 13-06](#)  
[RCW 41.04.362](#) State Employee Wellness Program  
[WAC 292-110-010](#) Use of State Resources  
[WAC 296-27-01103](#) Determination of Work Relatedness

**Effective Date:** November 19, 2007

**Revised:** December 29, 2020

**Approved by:** Original signed by Wendy Long  
Senior Director, Human Resources Division

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### Purpose

This policy describes the Department of Social and Health Services' commitment to the ongoing health and well-being of its employees through the creation, development, and maintenance of a wellness program for department employees.

### Background

The department encourages employees to engage in regular exercise, maintain a healthy diet, avoid harmful habits, engage in preventive health care, make an effort to reduce the stresses of daily life, and tend to their physical, mental, personal, and emotional needs.

These efforts enhance each employee's ability to serve customers, because improved health of employees can result in:

- Improved health and wellbeing
- Improved morale
- Increased productivity
- Lower injury rates
- Decreased absenteeism
- Reduced stress

- Improved recruitment and retention.

## Scope

This policy applies to all department programs and employees.

## Additional guidance

Administrative policy [13.08](#) purchased goods & services

Administrative policy [13.10](#) central contract services

Administrative policy [15.15](#) use of electronic messaging systems and the internet

Administrative policy [18.18](#) outside employment

[Wellness Program SharePoint](#)

## Definitions

**Headquarters (HQ) wellness team:** Means a team of representatives from each administration appointed by their assistant secretaries or the secretary's office, and chaired by the wellness coordinator, designated by the human resources senior director.

**Program wellness team:** Means a group of employees supporting the employee wellness program within a single administration or division.

**Worksite wellness team:** Means a group of employees who work in a single department building or set of adjacent buildings, and organize wellness activities for everyone in that location. Teams may be sponsored by the official safety and health committees for each department building or may form independently.

**Normal working hours:** Means the assigned core hours customarily worked by an employee, excluding break and lunch periods.

**Paid wellness service:** Means a service that is provided by a person who receives compensation in exchange for conducting classes, providing assessments, or leading other wellness-oriented services for department employees.

**Preventive health care:** Means health care directed towards preventing disease or reducing the severity or consequences of disease.

**Preventive health care strategies:** Include immunizations, health screening, lifestyle counseling, environmental changes, and following medical advice and procedures reducing risk factors

**Physical activities/exercise:** Means activities involving physical exertion, such as walking, climbing stairs, dancing, tai chi, yoga, running, or jogging for exercise

**Physical activity declaration:** A downloadable [form 27-052](#), which must be signed by employees before participating in physical activities or exercise occurring in department leased or owned buildings.

**Wellness support group:** Means two or more employees who regularly support one another to reinforce health and wellness behaviors.

**Wellness activity:** Includes teaching, learning, planning, promoting, or participating in regular exercise, groups, classes, or special events associated with health and wellness.

**Wellness participant:** A department employee involved in a department sponsored wellness activity or activity within an office facility.

## Policy

### A. Employee wellness program goals

1. This policy establishes the employee wellness program, rules governing its operations, and the roles and responsibilities of the people who design and implement the program.
2. The employee wellness program will:
  - a. Promote and encourage health screenings, health risk assessments, and wellness activities for all department employees;
  - b. Encourage and support program and worksite wellness teams and activities throughout the department;
  - c. Work cooperatively with the statewide wellness initiatives;
  - d. Identify models and opportunities for local and enterprise wide wellness initiatives and activities;
  - e. Identify community partners and state resources in implementing wellness initiatives and activities;
  - f. Freely distribute throughout the department information about statewide and internal wellness initiatives, creative programs, and best practices;
  - g. Provide feedback to the Washington wellness program; and
  - h. Develop objective measures to assess program effectiveness.

### B. Use of state resources for employee wellness

1. Employees may use their work computers during normal working hours in support of employee wellness initiatives. Use must comply with [administrative policy 15.15 use of state resources](#).
2. Approved computer uses for employee wellness include:
  - a. Visiting the Washington wellness and department wellness websites;

- b. Periodically completing a personal health resource assessment (HRA) through the employee's health plan;
- c. Carrying out other department employee wellness activities in support of department programs or local health and wellness committees; and
- d. Carrying out other Washington wellness activities such as the governor's health challenge.

**C. Risk reduction, liability, and inclusiveness of employee wellness**

1. The department does not assume liability for injuries that may occur from participation in wellness activities.
2. Employees (including those who are teleworking at home) wishing to participate in physical activities sponsored by the department, on state time, or physical activities occurring on department property (leased or owned) must sign [form 27-052 physical activity declaration](#) for each course or event involving physical activity acknowledging they:
  - a. Accept personal risk;
  - b. Have no known disease or condition that prevents their participation; and
  - c. Release the department of any and all liability.
3. A copy of the physical activity declaration must be provided to the employee wellness representative identified on the form, or to their designated representative.
  - a. The completed forms must be saved for two years after the employee ends participation in the activity.
4. Vendors paid by department funds to provide wellness services to department employees must carry personal liability insurance.
5. Employee participation in the wellness program, and all individually identifiable information gathered during the program, must remain confidential. ([RCW 41.04.364](#))
6. Whether an employee chooses to participate in the wellness program does not impact the employee's job security, promotional opportunities, or other employment rights.
7. Wellness teams develop wellness activities to include employees at various levels of health and fitness, including employees with health conditions that limit their day-to-day activities.

**D. Funding, authorized expenditures and contracting for employee wellness services**

1. Wellness activities do not require department contracts if they meet all of the following conditions:

- a. Take place in department facilities;
  - b. Are developed by department employees;
  - c. Occur during non-work time; and
  - d. Are paid for by the participants directly.
2. If the above wellness activities involve physical activity or exercise, they require [form 27-051 physical activity declarations](#) as specified in C-2 above.
  3. If the wellness activity is provided by a department employee for compensation, that person must regard that activity as “outside employment” in accordance with [AP 18.18 outside employment](#).
  4. Wellness activities officially sponsored by the department **and** paid for with department funds must comply with the ethics law, relevant state laws, department policies and regulations for purchase of goods and services and outside employment.
  5. Funding for wellness activities may come from participant payments, grants, donations, department authorized fund raising activities, agency budgets, and the industrial insurance retrospective rating program.
  6. Authorized expenditures for wellness program activities include any of the following:
    - a. Awards to promote participation;
    - b. Honoraria or gifts of not more than \$50 in lieu of contractor fees to persons who are not department employees;
    - c. Wellness products and services from the Health Care Authority;
    - d. Contractor fees for wellness services; and
    - e. Educational materials, such as wellness-related DVDs, games and literature.

**E. Employee wellness program roles and responsibilities**

1. The department secretary designated the human resources senior director as the executive sponsor. The department’s employee wellness executive sponsor:
  - a. Makes department executive decisions on wellness-related issues and policies; and
  - b. Seeks input from the department’s executive leadership team.
2. The department’s employee wellness coordinator:
  - a. Is appointed by the human resources senior director;
  - b. Represents the department on the Washington wellness coordinators group;
  - c. Serves as communication and organizational liaison between the Washington wellness program and the agency;
  - d. Chairs the HQ wellness team;
  - b. Coordinates wellness activities through the HQ wellness team; and

- c. Works within the department to enable, support, and encourage staff to develop worksite wellness teams in each building occupied by the department.
3. HQ wellness team members must:
  - a. Lend statewide leadership, expertise, and support to educate department employees on evidence based healthy lifestyle models and on wellness-related programs and activities;
  - b. Design and organize communications to inform employees of state, department, program, and worksite wellness related programs and activities; and
  - c. Organize wellness teams or other structures for sponsoring wellness within their programs, if they represent programs.
4. Worksite wellness teams are encouraged in department leased or owned buildings. If these teams develop, they may assume responsibility for communication and sponsorship of building level wellness activities, particularly in those buildings that involve several department programs. A building level appointing authority must approve the creation and makeup of those teams.
5. Program or worksite wellness teams sponsoring wellness activities must:
  - a. Ensure compliance with state personal and purchased service contracting guidelines, when department funds are used to contract for paid wellness services;
  - b. Ensure compliance with Parts B, C, and D of this policy for activities they sponsor;
  - c. Ensure prior approval is obtained from an appointing authority for wellness activities planned during normal working hours;
  - d. Inform the program wellness representative or the wellness coordinator of the wellness events or activities they sponsor; and
  - e. Ensure that each participant in wellness activities involving physical activity or exercise signs [form 27-052 physical activity declaration](#) and send that declaration to the appropriate program representative.